

Documentation of state's notable leaders encouraged

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KUCHING: Initiatives to document biographies of local notable personalities will help make known many of their untold stories and unofficial anecdotes and should be encouraged, Social Development Minister Tan Sri William Mawan said.

He said Sarawak has produced local leaders from the Brooke era till now but unfortunately many did not know their remarkable contributions to the state and nation especially the new generation because their outstanding achievements were not recorded.

"In this respect, the state government fully appreciates and supports the initiative undertaken by Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) to compile and produce the biographies of state leaders and other notable personalities.

"It will enable the new generation to understand and know the difficulties their past leaders had gone through and to learn from it," he said at the launch of the second biography of Dato Sri Edmund Langgu Saga at Unimas near here yesterday.

The book entitled 'Dato Sri Edmund Langgu Anak Saga, seorang pemimpin dan pejuang' was co-authored by two lecturers, Dr Neilson Ilan Mersat and Prof Dr Spencer Empading Sanggin.

Dr Neilson is the Deputy Dean for Research and Postgraduates while Prof Dr Spencer is currently the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the university.

The book gives a detailed account of Langgu's struggles and involvements in the social and cultural field as well as his political struggle through Sarawak National Party (SNAP), the now defunct Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) and Barisan Nasional (BN) until his



STORIES UNFOLDED: Mawan (second left) having a quick browse at the book together with Langgu (second right) and others after the launch yesterday. — Photo by Chimon Upon

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Tan Sri William Mawan, Social Development Minister

retirement from politics.

The book discusses in detail the difficult life he experienced during the Brooke rule, the Japanese Occupation (1941 to 1945), and the colonial rule from 1945 to 1963.

In addition, the book describes succinctly the schooling life Langgu had undergone during his childhood days at St Augustine's School in Betong where he had to walk for about three days from

his longhouse in Saratok to reach the school.

The book also gives a detailed account of his political life on both sides of the political divide.

He was at one time the secretary general of SNAP and in 1975 he was the opposition leader in Parliament but in 1976 when SNAP joined BN he was appointed as Deputy Agriculture Minister at the federal level.

After his retirement from

active politics, Langgu devoted much of his time in prompting the Iban language and culture through his active involvement in the Tun Jugah Foundation as a resource person for the Iban culture and is the chairman of the Iban Dictionary (Bup Serba Reti).

Meanwhile, Unimas vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Khairuddin Ab Hamid in his welcoming address said this was the second project of its kind to be undertaken by the university.

He said the first project was carried out in 2010 where the authors had the opportunity to compile and produce the biography of late Dato Sri Tra Zehnder.

He said Unimas would continue with this kind of project so that the public will know the contributions by notable individuals and personalities, particularly the future generations.